SPIRIT OF THE PRESS.

Editorial Opinions of the Leading Journals
Upon Current Topics—Compiled Every
Day for the Evening Telegraph.

GRANT'S PROGRESSIVE NEUTRALITY.

From the N. Y. World. It was but a few years ago when the American Minister to the Court of St. James informed the London Foreign Office that a certain vessel, then known as 290, but afterwards notorious as the Alabama, was being fitted out by the Messrs. Laird Brothers, of Birkenhead, in behalf of the so-called Confederate Government, in order to cruise and commit hostilities against the United States. and asking that it be embargoed. The Foreign Office, declining to interfere with property in a ship on the mere representation of a foreign minister, asked for evidence of the fitting-out, ownership, and destination. Affidavits were furnished, laid before the law officers of the crown, and pronounced insufficient. It was admitted that 290 was building for hostile, not peaceful, purposes, but it was denied that the affidavits were complete enough as to ownership or destination, Under no circumstances, however, would England detain or control private property on the mere application of a foreign minister. There must be proof. The English ministry refused to seize not only on that ground, but because there had not been an offense committed under the Foreign Enlistment act.

The administration of Grant has lately set England an example of a very different sort of neutrality.

The Minister of Peru represents to the Department of State that certain gunboats are being built in this city by Mr. Delamater, in behalf of Spain, in order to cruise and commit hostilities against Peru. Thereupon no exhibition of the evidence on which the Peruvian Minister relies is asked; no examination into the facts is made by or for Grant; but orders are straightway given to seize the boats. Here is contrast number one!

But this is not all. When Grant's administration is called on for defense of his conduct, he admits that he has no idea that the seized boats were ever intended to cruise or commit hostilities against Peru; but he believes they may be taken to Cuba and there used so as to release from service other war vessels, which then might, could, would, or should commit hostilities against Peru. Grant admits that his law-officer says that, under our neutrality law, not one of these gunboats can be detained or forfeited unless upon evidence that such gunboat (not some other gunboat is to cruise and commit hostilities against Peru. But the advice of his law-officer makes no impression on Grant. He fights on his own line, be it right or wrong! He insists that Spain, being at war-"a dormant war," it is called-with Peru or Chili, or anybody else, shall not increase her naval armaments by purchase in the United States if any of those powers object to such increase, even though there be no ascertainable proof that either of such powers is to be injured thereby.

Here is contrast number two!

Nor is this all. When the owners of these

seized gun-boats ask Grant to be good enough to libel them in court, as is usual in such cases, and there try the question whether the boats have violated any law, he replies by ordering them from the custody of our rather sensational Marshal Barlow to under the guns of the navy, and refuses to have anything to do with courts or the justice of even the Federal courts, to say nothing of State tribunals. Here is contrast number three!

We call the attention of publicists and students of international law to the advances this Government is now making in bellige rent rights and neutral duties. Especially let Lord Clarendon take note. Heretofore it has been by us held lawful to sell ships and arms to either belligerent as purely commercial business. So also has it been considered proper for us to furnish men, transport-ships, or arms, or troops. At the existing rate of progress in neutrality, these will soon be made unlawful.

Thus far, at least, we have gone. Grant will embargo any vessel on the mere statement of a foreign minister that she increases the naval armament of the power with which his Government has (not an active, but) a "dormant war," and will refuse to such ship an opportunity to purge herself by trial in

We make no criticism. Facts are sometimes strong enough to stand alone.

THE SOBER SECOND-THOUGHT ABOUT THE INCOME TAX. From the N. Y. Times.

We have shown, on a former occasion, that the practical experience of other nations has

demonstrated the utility of the income tax as a cheap, speedy, and equitable means of raising revenue. In answer to this irresistible evidence, the crotchet is put forward, namely, that the impost is "supereminently a tax on honesty;" that the people who ought to pay contrive to evade it; and that, "if only to limit perjury," we ought to abolish it. It provides a new sensation in these dull, het days, to find an argument so remarkable addressed to intelligent readers on a question of financial science.

If it be a fatal objection to a tax that people are tempted to evade it, we can only come to the conclusion, not that the income tax is bad, but that no good tax was ever yet or ever will be devised. The customs duties are a "tax on honesty," for they offer strong inducements for people to mislead the officers. Many very respectable persons think it no sin to avoid paying the duty chargeable on various descriptions of goods. They will boldly assert that they have nothing among their baggage upon which a duty can be levied. Wealthy commercial firms will sometimes largely understate the value of the goods consigned to them. They will even swear to statements which certainly would not stand the test of rigorous examination. "If only to limit perjury," then, we ought to abolish

all customs dues. The excise furnishes another instrument of torture for persons of weak moral character. Many people are very anxious to evade the whisky tax, and succeed by false representations in accomplishing their wishes. Therefore, since a whisky tax tempts a certain class to tell untruths, which is a very shocking thing to well-regulated minds, it is clearly a "tax on honesty," and ought to be relinquished. We might take every tax in turn and abandon it for the same cause, and at last leave the Government without a

revenue. The remedy for the falsification of income tax returns is any moment at hand. If the assessors did their duty, they would soon be able to inform themselves whether a man was making a fair retern of his income. They have the power to fix an arbitrary assessment in cases where they have reason to believe that neglect or dishonesty has been exhibited. There are people in the world who will always be disposed to save a few hundreds of dollars at the expense of the Government. But even after that deduction is made the tax produces ready assistance for the administration, it | 68 thstu3m B. H. ESLER, General Agent.

comes in quickly, and but little of it is lost on its way to the Treasury. Moreover, it lightens the burdens of the poor, and sends the tax-collector to the man who is earning the most money for the largest contribution towards the expenses of Government. The working classes in England know this, and hence the income tax is popular with them. The corresponding class here will soon make the same discovery, and at the same time. since the rich are not oppressed by the tax, for they can well afford to pay it, great opposition is not to be expected from them. fanciful objections of theorists can, in truth make no way against a sound and beneficia method of obtaining relief for a Government in seasons of difficulty. It would be much better, no doubt, to do without taxation altogether. But an invention for that purpose has yet to be devised, and in the meantime it is found that the impost which raises the maximum of revenue with the minimum of inconvenience or hardship is the in-come tax. It ought not to be given up till we have something more efficacious to use in

THE NEW COTTON CROP-FINE PROS-PECT FOR THE SOUTH.

From the N. Y. Herald. A few bales, and the first, of the new cotton crop have come to the New York market. That from Georgia, classed as low middling, was sold at auction for thirty-six cents a pound, and that from Alabama, classed as strict middling, brought forty-eight and a half cents. These, it is true, may be termed rather fancy prices, as the first bale or two of the new cotton crop always bring more than those that come after. But it is an indication of what the price will be hereafter. We may conclude, therefore, that the crop of 1869 will realize an immense sum of money. This crop is variously estimated—between two millions and a half bales to three millions probably it may reach two millions seven hundred or two millions eight hundred thousand bales. If the average price throughout the season of sales should not exceed twenty-five cents a pound—though from present appearances will be higher than that the crop will be worth over two hundred millions of dollars. From all the light before us there is reason to believe it will bring nearly that sum in gold. This production, too, is in addition to the tobacco, sugar, and other valuable crops of the South for exportation. Besides, that section of the country since the war has paid more attention to the raising of grain, corn, and other articles of food, and is new, perhaps, independent, or nearly so, of outside supplies. In short, the South this year will have a surplus production to be sold for cash, over and above the production of necessities, worth at least two hundred millions of dollars. Who will not say the South is becoming rich again? We must admire the wonderful recuperative power of the people there, and congratulate them on the splendid prospect they have of material prosperity. With more labor and capital to develop their resources, the Southern States will become very soon the richest country on the globe.

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